NEWSLETTER - MAY 1991

Hello again. This is the first of our austere 'hard times' newsletters. We're going to try to bring these out before each meeting as a reminder for members who don't write the dates in their diary. We think especially that you won't want to miss our May 14th meeting because after years of trying, we've finally got our hands on a copy of Bing's rare 1934 feature HERE IS MY HEART. Not only that, on the same programme, we're also showing the rarely seen 1932 short HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE 2 in which Bing appears with Burns and Allen and Stuart Erwin and also sings a sensational full-voiced version of 'Auf Weidersehn My Dear' - even better than he does in his 1931 Mack Sennett short. We're sharing the evening with the International Al Jolson Society, but at the time of writing, we haven't heard what they'll be bringing along.

The word is that Paramount are releasing more of Bing's movies on video in the USA and that one of them is the long lost TOP OF THE MORNING. If it happens this year, we'll get hold of a copy and show it at one of our later meetings. Those who were present at our February screening of HERE COMES THE GROOM will appreciate the quality of both picture and sound that accompanies these new commercial releases.

For 1991, we've been able to source some new and rare support material to go with our Crosby features. These include the Russ Colombo short THAT GOES DOUBLE, a colourised Betty Boop cartoon featuring a great Cab Calloway soundtrack, and early programmers with the likes of Helen Kane, Ruth Etting and Rudy Vallee! If there are enough requests, we can also show the mid-1930s TRANSATLANTIC MERRY GO ROUND which has a guest spot with the Boswell Sisters singing 'Rock and Roll'. (Maybe we'll just show that clip. The rest of the movie is a little dated. Jack Benny has a starring role but it's so early in his career that he buys a round of drinks!)

The run-down for the year so far

MAY 14 - HERE IS MY HEART, HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE 2 + AN AL JOLSON FEATURE
AUGUST 13 - GOING MY WAY (USA COMMERCIAL VIDEO RELEASE) + SHORTS
OCTOBER 8 - TO BE ANNOUNCED
DECEMBER 3 - BING CROSBY - HIS LIFE AND LEGEND (Probably the best TV documentary tracing Bing's career) + FEATURE TO BE ANNOUNCED.

Please remember that all our meetings are on Tuesdays this year. Venue is still the AMP Theatrette, Corner Bourke and William Streets, City with a starting time of 7.30 pm.

MEMBERS: $6 PENSIONERS & STUDENTS: $4 NON-MEMBERS: $7

NEW RECORD RELEASES

The main Crosby news these days concerns CD releases, although video issues are gaining in importance. As well as videotapes, more and more movies in the USA these days are coming out on videodisc, including 'Here Comes The Groom', 'A Connecticut Yankee' and 'Holiday Inn'. Given the depressed state of the Australian economy at the moment, I think that laserdiscs will be put on the back burner for the time being. However, from all reports, the CD market is booming. Certainly it's a good time to be collecting Crosby as more and more re-issues of old and hard to find material are turning up on these silver 'beer coasters'.

Let's start off with two local issues of interest: BING SWINGS IT (Axis CDAX 701594) and WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS (Axis CDAX 701580). The former contains the master tapes of the old 'Bing & Connee' and 'Bing and the Dixieland Bands' LPs while the latter features 16 tracks from the late 30s and early 40s that are rarely reissued.

Overseas CDs include:

THE BING CROSBY YEARS - a six CD set on Reader's Digest from the UK which features a collection of pop records from 1930 - 1952, a sizeable percentage of which are by Bing.

WHITE CHRISTMAS (the 1954 movie) on Japanese MCA (DMCL 1777)

SWINGING ON A STAR (the third of the old Bing's Hollywood series to be reissued) on U.S. MCA (MCAD-31367)

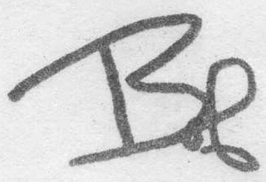
THE BING CROSBY STORY VOL 1 (1928 - 1932). Originally a double LP set from the late 1960s on CBS, this reissue uses the same master tapes and cover artwork. Available on U.S. CBS Special Products A2 201.

ON THE SENTIMENTAL SIDE (Living Era CD AJA 5072) and HERE LIES LOVE (Living Era CD AJA 5043) were originally LPs and feature compilations of tracks from 1931 - 1939.

HOLIDAY INN/BLUE SKIES (U.S. Vintage Jazz Classics VJC 1012-2) features a mix of publicity discs and soundtrack songs from the above movies.

THE CHRISTMAS SONGS (same label VJC-1017-2) features the 1947 (I think) Philco Xmas Show plus miscellaneous other radio tracks of the season.

ALL THE CLOUDS'LL ROLL AWAY (JSP CD 702) and START OFF EACH DAY WITH A SONG (JSP CD 701) from the U.K. each feature 75 minutes of Bing and Judy Garland and Bing and Jimmy Durante from radio. Sound is very good.

These days, many of the above are available in Australia, but you have to ring around to track down copies. Otherwise, Derek Parkes, 66 Firs Road, Firsdown, Salisbury, Wilts. SP5 1SW, England can supply them for you.

I'm afraid I have to close with some not altogether pleasant news regarding the state of my health. For the last two years, I have been suffering from an extremely rare but rather severe illness which causes a gradual weakening of the body's muscular system. Everyone who contracts the disease is affected differently and at different rates. In recent times, things have progressed to a stage where it is impossible to hide, so I wanted to warn members who haven't seen me for a while that I move (and speak) a little more slowly than before. Fortunately, the illness doesn't affect my work to any great degree, and is not the reason why I gave up the Crosby Voice (although it would have been). However, it is the reason why I can no longer bring out souvenir sheets for our film nights - there's just too much running around involved. Sorry to end on a low note but I feel that it's better to be direct about these things. See you on the 14th.